Schlesinger Says Leaks Curb CIA

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Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger said leaks from congressional committees investigating the Central Intelligence Agency have "dramatically reduced" the agency's sources of information.

Asked by Sen. James L. Buckley (Cons.-R-N.Y.) during a taped television interview set up by Buckley's office whether there is reason to fear that the leaks will undercut the willingness of foreign governments to work with the United States, Schlesinger replied, "I think we have more than reason to fear.

"I think that we recognize that the sources of information coming into the CIA have been dramatically reduced in both liaison relationships and in relation to the willingness of foreigners to work with our intelligence people."

Schlesinger, a former CIA director, called the problems "the inevitable effect of these kinds of revelations."

In the interview made public yesterday, which is to be broadcast by New York television stations this week, Schlesinger rejected the argument that information from intelligence sources is not needed because photographs that U.S. satellites take are sufficient.

Such an argument is "a dramatic over-simplification," he said.

"Photographs, of course, can provide you with indications with respect to the growth of certain types of capabilities, but one must recognize that nobody has ever been able to photograph intentions," he said.

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Because of the limitations of photographs, "all the elements of the intelligence community must be effective if the U. S. is to have eyes and ears in what continues to be a relatively dangerous world," he said.

He told Buckley he believes the world is "more dangerous than it was a year ago," citing "growing problems" from one end of the Mediterranean to the other and the aftermath of the "American debacle" in Southeast Asia.

Reducing defense spending and increasing money spent on public works would augment instead of solve the unemployment problem, Schlesinger said.

Schlesinger said those who favor such a reduction "tend to forget that the most valuable of social welfare services that a society can provide for its citizens is to keep them alive and free."

Schlesinger also said NATO members in Europe face a greater morale problem than the United States, but denied that they are not shouldering their military burden.

With 2.5 million men under arms, the NATO allies far outnumber the 300,000 Americans in Europe, he said. These countries "cannot individually and at the present time collectively stand up against the Soviet Union without the backbone that is represented by another superpower," he said.